

**Petition to Form a Students and New Archives Professionals Roundtable
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Statement of Purpose and Goals

The Students and New Archives Professionals (SNAP) Roundtable will advocate for and address the needs of new archivists within SAA and the archival profession.

Examples of new archivists would include (but not be limited to):

- current graduate students in archives programs
- archivists who are still searching for their first professional position
- archivists currently in their first professional position
- archivists with less than 5 years of full-time (or equivalent) professional experience
- related professionals, such as librarians and records managers, who are interested in becoming archivists or have recently taken on archival responsibilities

While SNAP will encourage people who identify as new archivists to take on leadership roles within the roundtable, we hope that others with an interest in the needs of new archivists, such as archival educators and internship supervisors, will join and participate in the group.

Although many new archivists are also new SAA members, we want to clarify that this group is not a new members roundtable. Our goal is to support new archivists whether or not they are new SAA members, and experienced professionals who are new to SAA have very different needs from archivists who are new to the profession. This group is also not specifically for young archivists. New archivists of any age will be welcome and encouraged to join.

Goals

1. Advocate for students, interns, new professionals, early-career project archivists, and archivists who are still looking for their first professional jobs. Provide a forum for new archivists to share their concerns and learn from each other. Promote awareness of the needs of new archivists within SAA and the archival profession. Raise the visibility of new archivists within SAA and the skills and expertise we bring to the profession.
2. Provide a formal channel for representing the needs of new archivists on issues that affect new archivists, such as dues increases, participation in the Annual Meeting, policies on educational standards, and employment opportunities and compensation.
3. Bridge the gap between participation in SAA student chapters and participation in SAA. Help new archivists to move from leadership positions within SAA student chapters into leadership positions within SAA sections and roundtables.
4. Facilitate and encourage remote participation in the group through social media and other online resources. Provide a model for other SAA sections and roundtables for successfully engaging members online. Collaborate with the Annual Meeting Task Force when possible.

5. Support new archivists as they begin their archival careers and as they move from entry-level positions into mid-career or managerial positions. This can be accomplished through mentoring, facilitating networking, and making recommendations to the Education Committee for relevant training and workshops. The roundtable will coordinate with SAA sections and roundtables, as well as external organizations, to support new archivists and promote relevant services to its members.

Statement of Need for a Students and New Archives Professionals Roundtable

At the 2011 business meeting at the Annual Meeting, SAA announced that 27% of its members are students. Add to that the number of members who are new professionals or still looking for their first professional job, and the proportion of new archivists among SAA's membership represents a significant constituency. Yet SAA does not have a group to address the needs of the newest members of our profession.

New archivists face many challenges as they enter the profession. They may not yet have specialized interests in the field that are addressed by existing sections and roundtables. Many cannot afford to attend SAA's annual meeting or workshops. Many new professionals don't yet have a wide network of connections they can draw upon to help with advice about issues relating to practice as well as help finding jobs. Some new archivists are also professionally or geographically isolated, making it difficult for them to find peers they can talk to about their problems.

While SAA as a whole and many of its members want to help new archivists as they transition in their careers, without a formal communication channel it can be hard to get information to and from new archivists. Navigating among SAA's many groups and opportunities can also be challenging, and some new archivists may be reluctant to participate in the community or unsure about how to fully utilize the resources available to them. New archivists are also often unaware of relevant programs and resources offered by SAA sections and roundtables.

Several peer professional associations in archival and allied fields have already formed subgroups for new professionals. These groups provide a valuable arena for networking, supporting career development, transitioning members to leadership roles in the organization, and providing a forum to discuss relevant issues. Examples include:

- Archives & Records Association, UK & Ireland (ARA), New Professionals group
- American Library Association (ALA), New Members Roundtable
- American Association of Museum (AAM), Emerging Museum Professionals group
- Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), New Members Discussion Group

As part of the process of preparing this petition, we established a blog¹ to solicit feedback from prospective members. Comments on the blog revealed broad interest in a roundtable for new

¹ <http://newarchivistsroundtable.wordpress.com>

archivists, from both new and experienced archivists. These commenters cited the difficulty of getting involved in SAA as a new archivist, the desire for programs and services tailored to new archivists, and the perception that SAA could do more to meet the needs of students and new professionals.

Our efforts to include as many archivists as possible in preparing this petition will ensure that the SNAP Roundtable has a large and active membership from the beginning. Although this petition is being submitted by one person, the process of preparing it has been a group effort that involved archivists at all stages of their careers. Since the roundtable planning blog was started in July 2011, it has received over 100 comments. The petition itself, which began as a Google Doc that anyone could read and comment on, received 40 comments from at least 15 different people during the week that it was open for editing. We have a demonstrated need for this roundtable and a demonstrated desire to get it started. Please help us make SAA an organization that is responsive to the needs of all its members.